

Message Text

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TAGS: EFIS ETRD CA PL
SUBJECT: RED HERRINGS: NOVA SCOTIA FISH TO POLAND

REF: HALIFAX 0260

1. GOC FISHERIES MINISTER ROMEO LEBLANC HAS AUTHORIZED BAY OF FUNDY HERRING FISHERMEN TO SELL 5000 METRIC TONS OF HERRING DIRECTLY TO POLISH FACTORY SHIPS FOR THE RECORD PRICE OF CDOLS 225 PER TON--MORE THAN TWICE THE PRICE THE POLES WERE OFFERING A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO. LEBLANC'S AUTHORIZATION FOR THE SALE WAS GIVEN DESPITE A PROTEST FROM THE NOVA SCOTIA MINISTER OF FISHERIES (REFTEL) THAT IT WOULD DEPRIVE UNDER-UTILIZED LOCAL PROCESSING PLANTS OF NEEDED WORK. ALTHOUGH NOVA SCOTIA OFFICIALS DENY HIS ALLEGATION, LEBLANC CLAIMS THAT LOCAL FISH PROCESSORS HAVE INSUFFICIENT PROCESSING CAPACITY TO HANDLE THE HERRINGS TO BE SOLD TO POLAND. PERHAPS TO SWEETEN THIS BIT OF FICTION AND TO MAKE IT EASIER TO OVERLOOK, LEBLANC ARRANGED AT ABOUT THE SAME TIME HE AUTHORIZED THE HERRING SALE TO INCREASE THE HERRING CATCH QUOTA IN THE BAY OF FUNDY AND CHEDABUCTO BAY FROM 98,000 TO 110,000 METRIC TONS. WHILE THIS IS
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LESS THAN LAST YEAR'S QUOTA, LEBLANC NOTED THAT THIS YEAR' HIGHER PRICES SHOULD "MORE THAN MAKE UP" DIFFERENCE" IN HERRING FISHERMEN'S INCOMES.

2. WHY IS LEBLANC BEING SO NICE TO THE POLES?
FOR THREE MAIN REASONS, APPARENTLY: FIRSTLY, HE BELIEVES THEY WERE HELPFUL IN THE PAST TWO YEARS IN

HELPING CANADA CHANGE THE BAY OF FUNDY HERRING FISHERY FROM A LOW-PRICE FISHMEAL OPERATION TO A HIGH-PRICE FOOD FISH OPERATION; SECONDLY, BECAUSE HE BELIEVES THAT OUTSIDE COMPETITION IS HELPFUL IN KEEPING THE PRICES OFFERED TO FISHERMEN HIGH; AND THIRDLY, TO SHOW APPRECIATION BECAUSE POLAND HAS BEEN GENERALLY SUPPORTIVE OF CANADA'S INITIATIVES WITHIN ICNAF IN THE PAST AND TO FOSTER CONTINUED SUPPORT AND COOPERATION IN FUTURE.

3. COMMENT: NOVA SCOTIA'S DEPUTY MINISTER OF FISHERIES CONCEDED TO ME THAT LEBLANC'S REASONS FOR AUTHORIZING THE SALE OF UNPROCESSED HERRINGS TO THE POLES HAD AT LEAST SOME VALIDITY AND THAT THE 1978 SALE OF 5000 TONS WAS SMALL POTATOES (SMALL KIPPERS?) COMPARED TO THE 1976 SALE OF 15,000 TONS AND THE 1977 SALE OF 18,000 TONS. WHEN I ASKED HIM HYPOTHETICALLY WHETHER HIS DEPARTMENT WOULD HAVE COOPERATED IF LEBLANC HAD CONSULTED WITH IT IN ADVANCE AND HAD MADE A POINT OF ASKING IT NOT TO PROTEST THE SALE, HE CHUCKLED AND SAID THAT THAT WOULD HAVE GIVEN HIM NO PROBLEM BUT THAT HIS POLITICAL MASTERS MIGHT NOT HAVE FOUND IT EASY TO COMPLY WITH SUCH A REQUEST. THIS LEADS ME TO BELIEVE THAT NOW THAT NOVA SCOTIA'S PROTEST HAS BEEN MADE FOR THE RECORD, WE SHALL HEAR VERY LITTLE IF ANYTHING FURTHER FROM NOVA SCOTIA'S OFFICIALDOM ON THIS MATTER. END COMMENT.
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